

REPORT NO.

DATE OF INFORMATION

DATE DIST. 31 MAR 52

NO. OF PAGES 6

**SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.**

LANGUAGE

CHANGE TO
UNCLASSIFIED
PER REGRADING
BULLETIN NO. 22

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25X1A

CPW Report No. 25 -- USSR
(Feb. 25-Mar. 10, 1952)

SUMMARY

The continuing session of the Supreme Soviet, the Finance Minister's budget message (Feb. 29), International Women's Day (Mar. 8), the anniversary of Gogol's death (Mar. 4), and the revived story of the Katyn Forest murders account for the bulk of the central and regional radio output. The large flow of budgetary themes familiarly link Soviet appropriations with peaceful intentions. The significance of International Woman's Day is also uniformly interpreted as part of the struggle for peace--by the Soviet Union. The Katyn Forest incident is discussed in the context of a renewed anti-Soviet war campaign.

The most significant agricultural news comes from the Ukrainian and Moldavian Republics where past failings and present unpreparedness are aired in special Party decisions. Broadcasts on Party activities are below the normal volume and are presented in familiar terms. Communist organizations throughout the USSR are cautioned against a relaxation of their vigilance over the country's life, and against "drifting with the tide" (plyt po techeniu). Closer Party attention to Komsomol education and stricter control over regional publications are urged.

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SOURCE: Monitored Broadcasts

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AGRICULTURE

The Plenary session of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Kiev, Feb. 29) reveals that the agricultural situation in various parts of the Republic ranges in definition from barely satisfactory to chaotic. Mismanagement, lack of proper organization, and deteriorating production are attributed to a "large number" of machine tractor stations of the Republic as a whole, but the Western provinces are said to be the worst of the lot. The 5000-word Central Committee decision even hints darkly at "a mutual coverage of shortcomings" (vzaemni pokryvania khib) in a number of places but does not elaborate the point. The long list of "serious" and "intolerable" agricultural shortcomings, as mentioned in the Party decision, is indicative of the official concern about the matter. Agricultural personnel is said to be only partially or inadequately trained, and wrongly distributed on top of that.

The Central Committee is particularly irate about the persistent practice of appointing politically qualified, rather well trained personnel to responsible agricultural posts, such as chairmen and managers of collective farms. The violation of contractual obligations by machine tractor stations is said to be widespread enough to suggest a standard procedure, particularly in the Western regions. Complicity between high Party and Soviet officials, on the one hand, and machine tractor station personnel, on the other, is vaguely referred to in the Party's assessment of the existing situation:

Many oblast and rayon Communist Party Committees and oblast and rayon Executive Committees of Soviets of Workers Deputies still preserve a false attitude toward the intolerable mistakes of a number of machine tractor stations.

At least 9 of the Ukraine's 25 oblasts are said to be far behind schedule in their tractor and combine maintenance and repairs. The western oblasts, however, are mentioned as being uniformly "unsatisfactory," and this would seem to indicate a greater number of critical areas than the following nine oblasts: Chernigov, Zhitomir, Kamenets-Podolsk, Odessa, Droboych, Stanislav, Ternopol, Volhynia, and Rovno. Significant in this connection also is the Central Committee's reference to the "many" machine tractor stations of the Republic as a whole which failed to fulfill their plans last year, and are showing no visible improvement this year.

The agricultural shortcomings discussed in the Party decision are indeed so many and varied that responsibility cannot be pinned on any single Party, Soviet, or agricultural organization. Lack of guidance from above, however, is considered as the chief reason. That guidance, the Central Committee declares, should be, but isn't coming primarily from the Ministries of Agriculture and Cotton Growing. These Ministries have failed to react in time to numerous machinery breakdowns, inordinate overexpenditures of fuel and other materials, and the unsatisfactory repairs of tractors and combines, particularly caterpillar tractors.

The political aspect of agricultural activities is said to have been gravely neglected, and that is where proper control is to be maintained from the bottom up, beginning with the political departments of the machine tractor stations. "The deputy directors of machine tractor stations for political affairs must assign Communists and Komsomol members to the most responsible tasks." This is one way to "increase the struggle against pilfering of communal property." Another way is to look into the working and living conditions of the tractor drivers and combine operators. The premises of the machine tractor stations are to be "cleaned of waste and garbage," and the wages of brigade leaders, drivers, and other workers must henceforth be paid "on time and in proper order."

The agricultural situation in the Moldavian SSR is bad enough to warrant grave official concern, according to a lengthy report by Brezhnev, First Secretary of the Moldavian Party's Central Committee. Although much progress is said to have been made in the amalgamation of small collective farms into larger units, there appears to be little progress if any elsewhere. The 2,001 collective farms of the Republic have been combined into 1,367, and the number of agricultural specialists serving as kolkhoz chairmen has risen from 35 in 1950 to 293 in 1952. Similar though less spectacular successes were registered by the rural Party organizations. Twelve thousand two hundred Party members are now said to be "active" in the villages in addition to the 185 "groups of candidates" for Party membership.

Discussing agricultural shortcomings in the Republic, Brezhnev had much more to say, however. One of the most serious drawbacks is that agriculture has so far failed to justify expectations: "We did not obtain an increase in yields in many rayons and kolkhozes." Only small harvests are said to have been gathered in many rayons, and the result was large-scale defaulting "on obligations to the State." Big losses of grain and other crops are admitted in a number of rayons, among them Volontirovka, Kipertcheny, Vertyuzhany, and Romanovka. In many others the performance is just as poor:

We cannot permit such a state of affairs in which many kolkhozes...fail every year to fulfill the agricultural work within the set time limits. They obtain small crops; they do not settle accounts with the State; they pay the kolkhozniks little for their work.

Brezhnev is particularly critical of the tendency to underpay the collective farmers. This practice, in his opinion, is not conducive to higher production and greater enthusiasm for collectivization, and may even account to a large extent for the poor crops. Equalization of pay, reminiscent of the long abolished practice in the other Soviet republics, must be "liquidated" at once. Labor discipline among the collective farmers, which is admittedly "particularly unsatisfactory," should be strengthened and "permanent" field brigades and teams established.

The gist of Brezhnev's report is that, despite some measure of success attained in some phases of agriculture, notably collectivization and political organization, this branch of Moldavia's economy is still backward and needs a thorough overhauling. Following are some of the salient points indicative of the many weaknesses yet to be overcome:

Cotton: It is well known that the...Vulkaneshty, Kagul, Baymakliya, Romanovka, and Kaynary Rayons failed to fulfill their 1951 cotton delivery plans;

Machinery: Many machine tractor stations are utilizing their equipment very badly; they are allowing idleness of tractors and machines;

Personnel: The kolkhozes of Moldavia need a huge army of cadres...more serious attention must be paid to the 3-year agrozootechnical courses where matters are going rather badly;

Sugar beets: The fact that the Party and Soviet organs...are paying little attention to the growing of sugar beets bough about a situation in which many kolkhozes...are obtaining very small sugar beet yields;

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Potatoes: The problem of seed potato growing is not being solved in our Republic;

Cows, Milk: We still have many kolkhozes where there are very few animals, particularly cows. In the past year the kolkhozes of the Republic did not fulfill the State milking plan;

Bread: The production capacities of the bread factories and bakeries are not fully satisfying the growing demands of the population;

Housing: We are not even able to fulfill the State tasks regarding the building and commissioning of industrial enterprises or, more particularly, housing.

Among the other agricultural broadcasts monitored in the period under review is an appeal by the Estonian Conference of Collective Farm Chairmen (in Estonian, Mar. 2) to all farmers, urging them to obtain greater harvests and to increase their cattle herds--at least 17 centners of grain crops per hectare and a 15 percent minimum increase in the number of cows.

The spring sowing campaign is bound to fail if the existing irrigation network is not reconstructed on time and new canals added, according to KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA on Mar. 5. Most of the available machines and "earth-moving detachments" did not start work until recently, although they had been standing idle "for a long time." In many of the rayons work has not even begun. The planned new irrigation system is said to be far from completed where it is needed most.

In Kzyl-Orda, Alma-Ata, Taldy-Kurgan, Semipalatinsk, and East Kazakhstan Oblasts soil improvement teams have not yet been formed; very few projects and plans have been drawn up.

PRAVDA (Feb. 28) previews the great tasks facing Soviet agriculture in 1952, which will involve the "utilization of all forces" of the collective farm villages. It concludes that, "In order to implement these tasks, the standards of leadership in agriculture must be improved." Idle machinery, frequent breakdowns, and consequent poor harvests are discussed editorially in familiar terms by RADIANSKA UKRAINA (Feb. 28), MOLOT (Feb. 28), KOMMUNIST (Feb. 28), BOLSHÉVISTSKOYE ZNAMYA (Feb. 29), and RADIANSKA ZHIROMIRSHCHINA (Mar. 5).

Cultural services for collective farmers are dealt with briefly in a PRAVDA editorial on Feb. 26 which bemoans the lack of cultural and educational facilities in remote agricultural artels, particularly enlarged farms. MOLOT (Mar. 5) speaks of the "ineffectiveness" of the rural wall newspapers which tend to "lose contact with the masses." The paper reminds the farm editors that the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party "forbids the publishing of general articles and notes having no connection with the practical task of a given collective." A wall newspaper, it says, must discuss present realities and encourage greater constructive efforts on the part of the farmers. The publication of "unmasking notes" (razoblachitelnie zametki), is not enough. The publicizing of shortcomings must be followed by "suggesting ways for their elimination."

Miscellaneous: A Home Service report of Feb. 27 refutes the claim of "bourgeois historians" that hunting and trade were the chief Russian occupations up to the 16th century. "Not only the Slavs, but even the pre-Slav tribes living in the territory of our Motherland 2,000 to 3,000 years before our era were agriculturists."

PARTY ACTIVITIES

Purposefulness (tselestremlennost), says PRAVDA on Feb. 27, should characterize the activities of every Bolshevik leader. This is particularly true now when the country is in the process of advancing from one stage of development to another. Too many Party leaders are said to be "scattering their efforts and attention" (raspylyaut svoi sily i vnimanie) in the attempt to solve a variety of problems which come within

the competence of the Soviet and economic organizations. Lenin and Stalin are quoted in support of the Party's unalterable view that all the Party efforts must always be concentrated on the key sectors (kluchevie uchastki) of the national economy, that is, the weakest link.

Agricultural backwardness (otstavanie selskogo khozaistva) is implicitly admitted to be the present weakness demanding concentrated attention. The Kurgan Oblast Party is held up as a model of Communist efficiency and "purposefulness": It has directed all its efforts toward the speediest elimination of agricultural backwardness. The same, however, cannot be said about many other oblasts, according to PRAVDA. In Kirov and Yaroslav Oblasts, for example, the lumber industry and agriculture are still doing a poor job because the appropriate Party officials are trying to solve too many problems at the same time. While frowning upon the wasted efforts of well meaning but obviously overzealous Communists, the editorial also infers that the other extreme is just as undesirable in the Soviet scheme of things: "the desire to drift with the tide smoothly and unperturbably..." (zhelanie plyt po techeniu plavno i spokojno) must be alien to the true Bolshevik leader.

VELIKOLUKSKAYA PRAVDA (Feb. 27) speaks disapprovingly of the way the Komsomols are handled by the oblast and rayon Party organizations. It is the duty of the latter to "guide and direct" the political self-education of the Komsomols and encourage their enlightening activities among the non-Party youth. This, according to the paper, has always meant an even distribution of Komsomol members among the working youth so that each of them could inspire greater efforts by setting "an example of self-denying work" (primer samootverzhennoogo truda).

Reports from Penovsky, Usvyatsky, Oktiabrsky, and Uminsky Rayons, says the editorial, provide discouraging evidence. Unable to get any assistance from their Party mentors, the Komsomol organizations are said to manifest a singular lack of initiative in combating "tendencies of idleness, carelessness, bad organization, and waste." This, says the paper, is "all wrong." The Komsomol's lack of political influence among the masses of the youth is said to be traceable to the lack of Party interest in Komsomol affairs.

LENINSKAYA SMENA (Mar. 1) complains that the Kazakhstan Komsomols, particularly in Semipalatinsk Oblast, are training their cadres "badly," apparently forgetting that Soviet youth must be brought up "in the spirit of Communism." This theme, however, is treated in general terms and no details are offered.

An unsigned PRAVDA article (Mar. 1, not broadcast) supports the claim of Saratov's KOMMUNIST that Komsomol affairs receive far less regional press attention than they are entitled to. BOLSHEVISTSKOYE ZNAMYA, for example, very seldom (lish izredka) shows any interest in Komsomol education, and the fact that many Komsomol political schools in Odessa Oblast have not yet opened their classes have "failed to disturb the paper" (ne vstrevali redaktsiu gazety).

SOVETSKAYA MOLDAVIA, according to the article, usually confines itself to brief critical notes on Komsomol education while such oblast papers as MOLOT, VOLZHSKAYA KOMMUNA, and KURSKAYA PRAVDA are "losing sight" (vypuskayut iz polya zreniya) of Komsomol life altogether:

It is the direct duty of the newspaper to elucidate profoundly and thoroughly the questions of theoretical study by Komsomols and non-Komsomol youth.

Russian version:

Priamoy dolg gazet--gluboko i vsestoronne osveshchat voprosy teoreticheskoy ucheby komsomoltsev i molodezhi.

Podkurkov in PRAVDA (Feb. 28, not broadcast) declares that the rayon press has been

neglected by the higher Party echelons and needs closer supervision. He is particularly critical of the habit of many newspapers of sending their editors as "authorized representatives" (upolnomochennye) to various economic drives, leaving the business of publication in the hands of "second raters" (vtorostepennye ljudi). This practice is said to be particularly widespread in Kuibyshev Oblast, Byelorussia, Kara-Kalpak ASSR, and Tatar ASSR, but is apparently not confined to those areas alone.

Podkurkov speaks of certain oblast, Krai, and republican Party Committees which show little concern about "raising the ideological-political level and business qualifications of the rayon newspaper workers" (povyshenie ideino-politicheskogo urovnya i delovoy kvalifikatsii rabotnikov rayonnikh gazet). As an example of what not to do, the author cites the case of the Vyselkovsky Rayon, (Krasnodar Krai), Party chief who declared that "there will be no harm in closing the paper for a few days" (ne budet nikakoi bedy, esli na neskolko dney zakryt gazetu) and sending the editor to participate in an economic drive. Another fault of the rayon dailies, according to the author, is that they devote much too little space to Party life, and are generally "grey and dull" (serie, skuchnye). In many newspapers, it is claimed, Party themes (partiynye temy) are treated briefly and superficially, while in others they are seldom even referred to.

MISCELLANEOUS

An unusual TASS item (to Europe, Feb. 27) informs its listeners abroad of the solemn service that took place at the Moscow Patriarchal Church in honor of St. Alexius Day. The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Alexius, who officiated, was congratulated by the Moscow faithful "on the day of his angel." This item was not heard on the home service.

The first combine harvester in the world was invented by a Russian engineer A.R. Vlasenko 10 years before the appearance of the first American harvester, according to Academician Danilevsky (Mar. 5). The Americans are said to have merely "copied the Russian invention."